



**Kahle Community Park**  
Lake Tahoe



**Minden Park Gazebo**  
Minden



**Spooner Lake Trail**  
Lake Tahoe



**Zephyr Cove Park**  
Lake Tahoe

## **CHAPTER 11:** **Parks and Recreation Element**



**Hot Air Balloon Race**  
Herbig Park, Gardnerville



**Adventure Camp**  
Gardnerville



**Job's Peak Trailhead**  
Foothill Road, Gardnerville



**Lampe Park**  
Gardnerville

## Introduction

Parks and recreation facilities provide many important benefits to Douglas County. They give residents and visitors a place for both active and passive recreation. They provide a place to engage in organized sports, as well as a quiet setting for picnics and relaxation. They often include unique features, such as open space areas for outdoor recreation and nature study. The facilities provide a venue for groups to meet, classes to be held, and special events, which promotes community involvement. The parks, trails, and open space areas also enhance the distinct identity of communities by creating community focal points, inspiring community pride, and protecting community cultural and historical resources.



Carson Valley Cruisers Car Show

Parks and recreation also promote:

- 1) **Economic vitality.** Parks and recreation promote economic vitality by attracting tourists, businesses, families, and retirees, enhancing real estate values, reducing taxes, and stimulating equipment sales.
- 2) **Environmental Sustainability.** Parks and recreation can play a role in environmental sustainability by enhancing and protecting clean water, controlling flooding, protecting clean air, reducing traffic congestion, reducing energy costs and preserving biological diversity.
- 3) **Alleviate Social Problems.** Most common to parks and recreation benefits are those that alleviate social problems by protecting community regeneration, preventing deviant behavior amongst youth, raising levels of educational achievement, facilitating healthy lifestyles and reducing stress.

The Douglas County Parks and Recreation Master Plan, adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 1996, and as amended, provides a plan for providing parks and recreation in Douglas County and is incorporated in its entirety into this Master Plan. The primary objective of the Parks and Recreation Plan is to improve the quality of life for residents within the community. The Parks & Recreation Department is responsible for implementing the Plan and actively works to implement the Department's Mission Statement:

*To continue to create and preserve quality parks and recreation opportunities, serving people of all ages and interests, that positively affect the community and enrich life.*

## Issues

### Carson Valley Community Center

The most desired facility in Douglas County since the 1960's has been an indoor recreation Community Center in the Carson Valley. Over the last decade, the community has also expressed interest in the County building a new Senior Center because the existing Senior Center in Gardnerville does not have the capacity to address the needs of the growing senior community.

In 2011, the Parks and Recreation Commission and Senior Services Advisory Council reconfirmed the needs of the community and previous work done by Douglas County through public input. In response, the Board of Commissioners made a Community Center with senior facilities a top priority. The hope was that this facility would include meeting space, program space, gymnasiums, fitness facilities, jogging tracks, racquetball courts, administrative offices, senior daycare, commercial kitchen, senior activity areas, game rooms, and amenities to attract residents and tourists of all ages and abilities.

In 2011, the Board of Commissioners approved operational funding for the project. An increase in the public utility operator fee of one-half of one percent is expected to generate approximately \$425,000 per year to run and maintain a new combined community and senior center. The fee will cost each household in the County about \$10 per year. Earlier in the year, the Board also confirmed the recommendation to locate the center in Herbig Park, which the County already owns. The site offers several other substantial advantages: convenient neighborhood access, existing utilities, a nearby signalized intersection, and the potential for a future access road and connecting trails. The next steps to getting the center built will be to develop a construction and financing schedule and to find a tax-neutral source of revenue for servicing debt on the project. With community enthusiasm growing, plans are also underway to form a private foundation to support the community center.

### Trails

The Parks & Recreation Department has taken an active roll in trail planning and has been involved in the development of the Genoa Trail and Nevada Stateline-to-Stateline Trail, as well as creating additional pedestrian and bike connections from population bases to recreational facilities. Refer to the Transportation Element and Douglas County Comprehensive Trails Plan for more information on the County's existing and future trails.

### Funding

Over the years, the Parks and Recreation Department has become increasingly dependent upon revenue generated from fees and charges to fund maintenance, operations and recreation programs. This trend is likely to increase significantly in time because previous funding sources (room tax, sales taxes, and residential construction tax) no longer provide enough funding to support operations as well as capital improvements. In addition, the number of county facilities and the cost of their maintenance have increased. Therefore,

other sources of revenue and donations will likely be key to the successful operation of an expanded parks and recreation program. Map 11.1 depicts the planning areas for Douglas County Parks.

### Current Inventory

Douglas County has some of the finest recreational opportunities in the country. Residents and tourists can participate in most any activity imaginable from hot air ballooning to skiing or barrel racing. Some of these facilities are run by private businesses or are State or Federally-owned. The following discussion of standards and facilities is limited to those run by Douglas County or the County's political subdivisions, such as Towns or GIDs.



Fishing Derby

### Standards

In order to maintain the quality of life enjoyed by residents, a standard of park land per 1,000 residents is recommended. The national standard is 10 acres per 1,000 residents. Currently, in Douglas County there are 845 acres of park land under the jurisdiction of the County, Towns, and GIDs, which equates to well over 10 acres per 1,000 residents. The following Figure 11.1 establishes the park standards for Douglas County.

**Figure 11.1**  
**Parks and Recreation Standards**

<b>Park Acres</b>	<b>National Recreation &amp; Park Association Standards</b>	<b>Douglas County Standards</b>
	<b>10 Acres per 1,000</b>	<b>10 Acres per 1,000</b>
Mini Park	1 per 1,000-5,000	N/A
Neighborhood/Community Park	1 per 4,000-20,000	1 per 4,000
Regional Park	1 per 50,000	1 per 35,000
Indoor Recreation Facility	1 per 20,000	1 per 20,000
Senior Center	1 per 15,000	Included in Indoor Rec.
Swimming Pool	1 per 20,000	1 per 20,000
Baseball/Softball	1 per 2,000-6,000	1 per 2,000
Football	1 per 20,000	1 per 10,000
Soccer	1 per 20,000	1 per 2,500
Tennis	1 per 2,000	1 per 3,000
Hardcourts	1 per 10,000	1 per 6,000
Playgrounds	1 per 5,000	1 per 2,500
Open play	1 per 3,000	1 per 2,000
Shooting Range	1 per 20,000	1 per 50,000
Covered Group Picnic Activity Area	1 per 3,000	1 per 3,000



### Types of Parks and Facilities

The following are the types of parks and an inventory of current facilities. Additional information is provided in the Douglas County Parks and Recreation Plan. Maps 11.2 through 11.5 depict the location of Douglas County and State of Nevada parks in the Carson Valley Regional Plan area, Lake Tahoe Regional Plan area, and the Topaz Lake Regional Plan area.

#### ***Mini-Parks***

A Mini-Park is any park with less than five (5) acres of usable park land. The primary purpose of these parks is passive recreation, picnicking, playgrounds, and other small-scale activities. Typically, these parks do not include sports fields or practice fields and are for the benefit of those living adjacent to the park and are within walking distance of the neighborhood they are located within. They do not usually include parking or restrooms. George Brautovich Park, Minden Town Park, and Westwood Park are examples of this type of facility. George Brautovich Park is the only such facility maintained by the County; the rest are maintained by Towns or GIDs.

No new mini-parks, unless funded independent of Douglas County, including continuing maintenance, are recommended in the future by Douglas County due to their limited use, low demand, and high cost of maintenance.

#### ***Neighborhood Parks/Community Facilities***

Nevada Revised Statutes defines a Neighborhood Park as any facility under 25 acres. These community facilities usually consist of parking, restrooms, athletic fields, and other recreational amenities. They are typically within a convenient driving distance such as 5-15 minutes and are also located in a residential setting to serve the same needs as the Mini-Park. The direction in park planning for the last decade has been in favor of these larger facilities, which provide a greater variety of activity and are more cost effective to maintain.



**Stodick Park**

Stodick Park, Lampe Park, Ranchos Aspen Park, Topaz Ranch Estates Park, Kahle Community Park, and Zephyr Cove Park are examples of Neighborhood Parks. Each includes ball fields, restrooms, and other park amenities above and beyond a picnic and playground facility.

### ***Regional Parks***

The County also maintains two regional park facilities. These include the Douglas County Fairgrounds and Topaz Lake. These facilities are larger in scale and are destination spots which people are willing to travel more than 15 minutes to use.

### ***Special Use Facilities***

A special use facility typically has a single focus, such as the Skate Park, Model Airplane Complex or the Carson Valley Swim Center. A sports field complex or shooting range could also be considered a special use facility

### ***Community Center Facility***

The Kahle Community Center and Gymnasium, Topaz Ranch Estates, Douglas County Senior Center and the Recreation Annex in Gardnerville are the only indoor recreation facilities owned by Douglas County. Typically, a Community Center is an integral part to any community and these types of facilities have become more important to local agencies in meeting community needs. These facilities have been constructed to due their relatively small impact on operating cost and the ability to create multi-generational opportunities and consolidations.



**Kahle Community Center**

Many organizations and agencies throughout the United States have constructed community centers and are generating revenues which substantially reduce overall operating cost and provide significant recreational community benefits to their particular jurisdiction. The Kahle Community Center and Gymnasium at Lake Tahoe is a 25,000 plus square foot facility and is an excellent example of a Community Center facility, one which has been modeled by many agencies across the country.

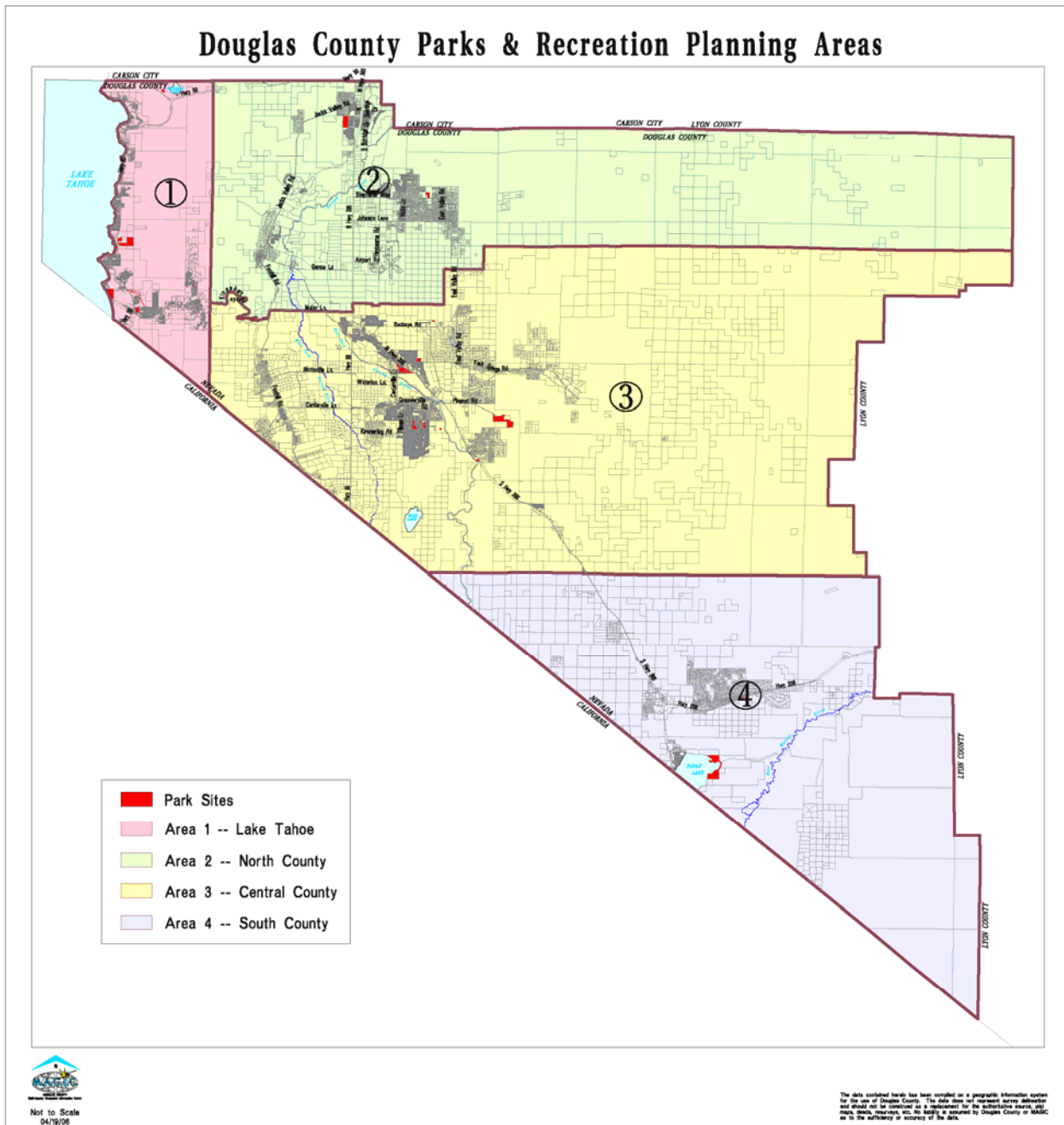
### ***Senior Services***

Douglas County Senior Services provides many activities, services and programs. The current Senior Center, located in Gardnerville, provides the senior community an opportunity to socialize, enjoy a nutritious meal and get involved in a number of different activities, special events and excursions. The services and center are for residents 60 years of age or older. Senior Services provides nutritious meals, support services, homemaker and transportation services in order to preserve each senior's independence.

Since the Senior Center in Gardnerville is too small to meet the needs of the growing senior population, in 2011 the Board of Commissioners voted to approve operational

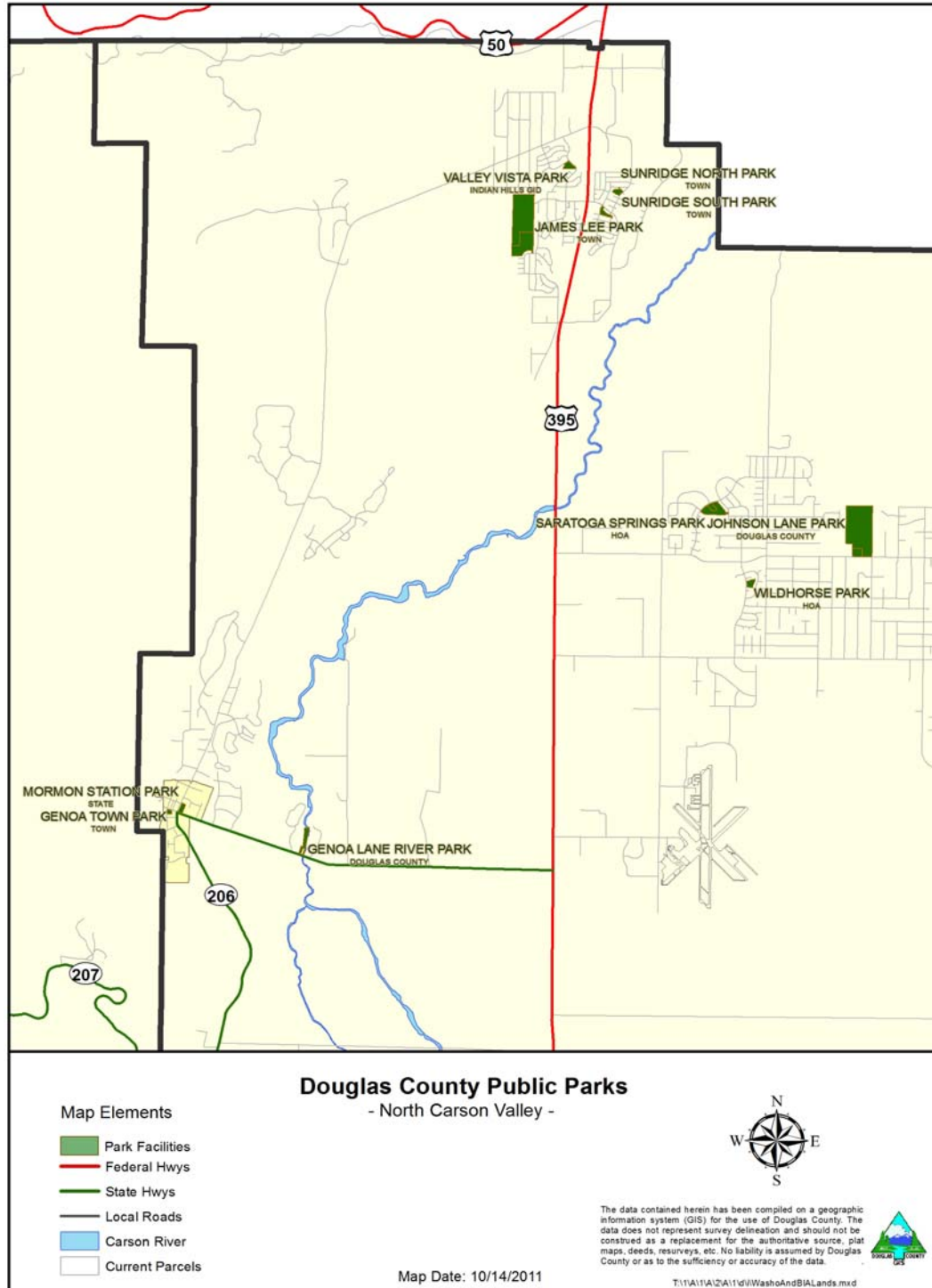
funding to run and maintain a combined Community Center and Senior Center. The Center will be located in Herbig Park, which the County already owns. The site offers several substantial advantages: convenient neighborhood access, existing utilities, a nearby signalized intersection, and the potential for a future access road and connecting trails. The next step is to develop a construction and financing schedule and to find a tax-neutral source of revenue for servicing debt on the project.

## Map 11.1 Planning Areas for Douglas County Parks

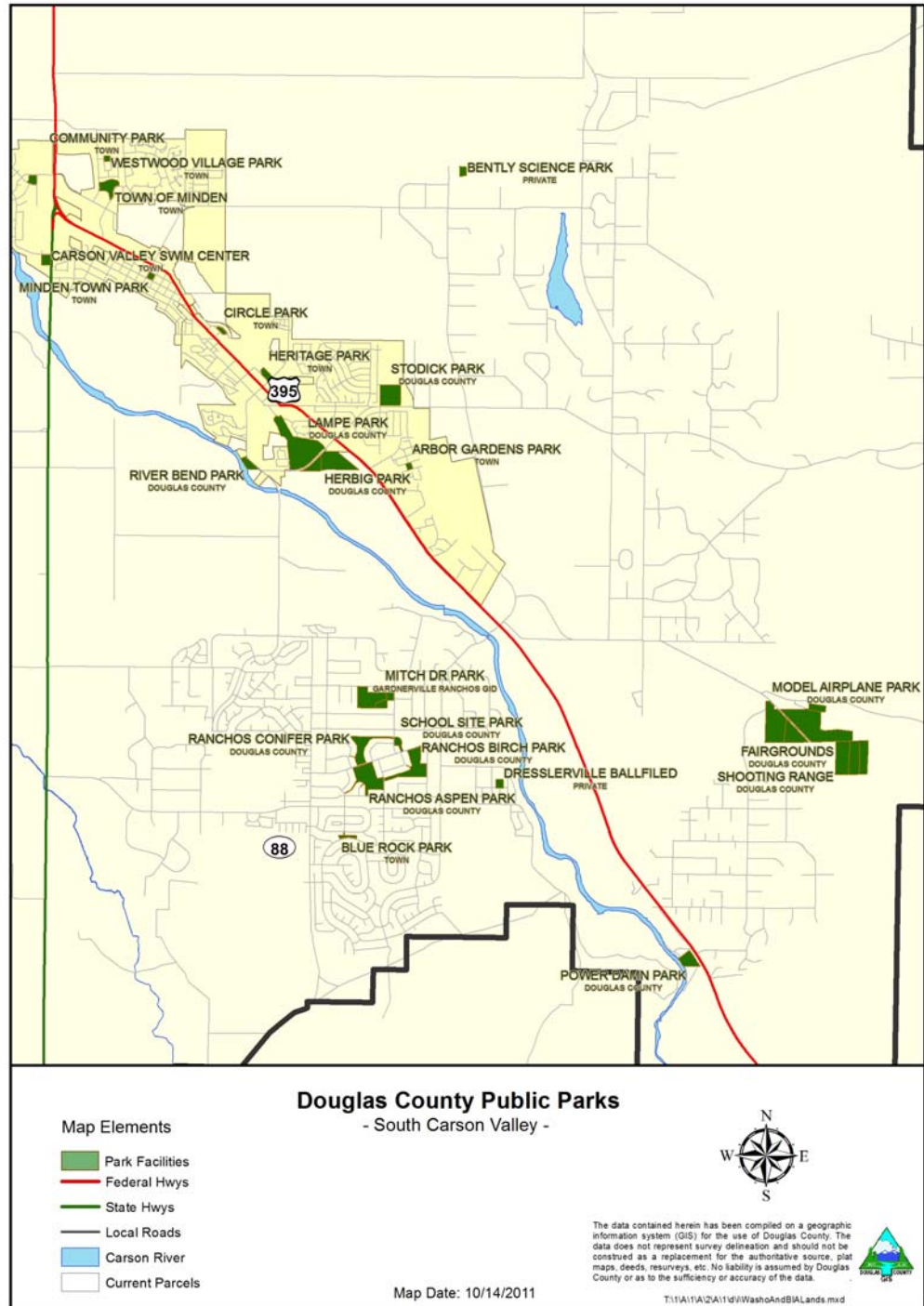




**Map 11.2**  
**Douglas County and State of Nevada Parks –North Carson Valley**

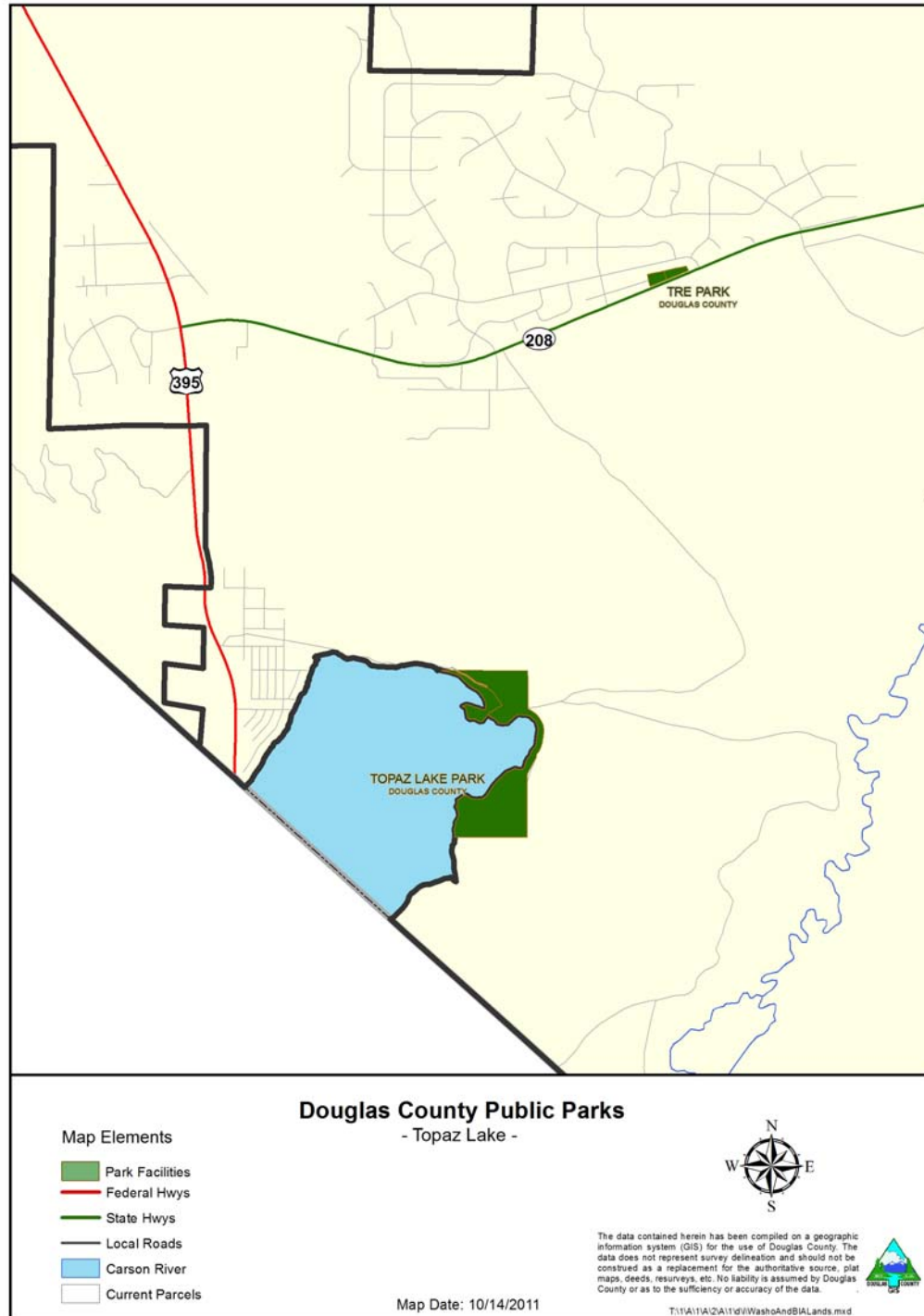


**Map 11.3**  
**Douglas County and State of Nevada Parks – South Carson Valley**





### Map 11.5 Douglas County and State of Nevada Parks – Topaz Lake



## **Parks and Recreation (PR) Goals, Policies, and Actions**

### **PR Goal 1            To implement the Parks and Recreation Plan.**

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| PR Policy 1.1  | To protect the natural, cultural, and scenic qualities of Douglas County, including open spaces, public lands, agricultural lands, wetlands, and waterways that are critical to the quality of life in our community. The Department will continue to plan for the needs and preserve the rights of current and future residents, and especially their access to public parks and recreation opportunities, while ensuring high standards of safety and public welfare. |
| PR Policy 1.2  | To continue to make available to county residents and visitors alike a variety of active and passive park facilities and recreation programs that satisfy their needs and enhance their basic quality of life.  |
| PR Policy 1.3  | In a latter regard, to provide recreation opportunities that enhance the physical and mental well-being of the community, which are deemed of critical importance.  |
| PR Policy 1.4  | To create an edifying and positive public image for the community through the appearance of the parks and publicly owned, landscaped areas maintained by the Department.  |
| PR Policy 1.5  | To foster an atmosphere in which members of the community can voice ideas and concerns, and know that they are being listened to, which is deemed highly important.   |
| PR Policy 1.6  | To accord top priority to obtaining indoor facilities that appeal to the recreational and social needs of citizens of all ages.   |
| PR Policy 1.7  | To accord similar priority to the acquisition and operation of an indoor facility with enhanced senior recreation and support facilities.   |
| PR Policy 1.8  | To continue development of adventure-related facilities, such as skateboard parks and BMX tracks, in appropriate areas of County-owned/managed properties.  |
| PR Policy 1.9  | To include special use areas for dog owners and their pets, whether on or off leash, in all future park developments, as deemed appropriate.  |
| PR Policy 1.10 | To afford recreational access to the Carson River on public lands or on private lands through voluntary agreements, which continues to be a priority for the Department and the County.   |
| PR Policy 1.11 | To continue to acquire/develop facilities through joint ventures and agreements with other public and/or private entities including, but not  |



limited to: Douglas County School District, Nevada Division of State Parks, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, Nevada Department of Transportation, and private enterprises.

- PR Policy 1.12 To provide cost-effective stewardship for the County's park resources through careful management and conscientious maintenance.
- PR Policy 1.13 Whenever possible, to construct or otherwise acquire facilities that can generate revenue, as well as meeting the needs of the community and promoting tourism.
- PR Policy 1.14 To promote tourism and the use of self-sustaining parks and recreation opportunities by those visiting Douglas County.
- PR Policy 1.15 To constantly seek out new sources of traditional, private, and alternative funding for facility construction and maintenance.
- PR Policy 1.16 To develop and maintain clear and simple mechanisms by which the public can make donations for park and recreation improvements for park and programs.
- PR Policy 1.17 To continually recruit and develop volunteer resources, which are deemed critical to the success of our recreational endeavors.
- PR Action 1.1 [Develop a construction and financing schedule and source of revenue for servicing debt on the construction of the combined Community Center and Senior Center.](#)
- PR Goal 2 To create a system of open space areas and linkages throughout the county that protects the natural and visual character of the county, provides contiguous wildlife corridors, and provides for appropriate active and passive recreational uses.**
- PR Policy 2.1 The County should establish an open space acquisition program that identifies acquisition area priorities based on capital costs, operation and maintenance costs, accessibility, open space needs, resource preservation, ability to complete or enhance the existing open space linkage system and unique environmental features. Techniques for acquisition may include fee simple acquisition, acquisition of development rights, transfer of development rights, clustering, or other measures.
- PR Policy 2.2 Douglas County should consider efforts to manage riverbank areas to provide for both active and passive recreational opportunities.

- PR Action 2.1     Update the 2003 Trails Plan to promote the design and operation of a regional trail system which provides access connection between open space areas and recreation facilities.
- PR Goal 3        To preserve USFS, BLM, and other public lands for their habitat, recreational, and scenic values.**
- PR Policy 3.1     The County shall work with other governmental entities to ensure that areas acquired as part of the Open Space System are developed, operated, and maintained to provide the county with a permanent, publicly accessible open space system.
- PR Policy 3.2     Douglas County shall encourage and support land exchanges between private land owners, the U.S. Forest Service, and the BLM when such exchanges are consistent with the Master Plan, particularly the Land Use Element.